

Lenten Devotional March 27, 2024

Scripture

Psalm 51

- 1 *Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.*
- 2 *Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin.*
- 3 *For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.*
- 4 *Against you, you alone, have I sinned,
and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you are justified in your sentence
and blameless when you pass judgment.*
- 5 *Indeed, I was born guilty,
a sinner when my mother conceived me.*
- 6 *You desire truth in the inward being;
therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.*
- 7 *Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*
- 8 *Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.*
- 9 *Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.*
- 10 *Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right spirit within me.*
- 11 *Do not cast me away from your presence,
and do not take your holy spirit from me.*
- 12 *Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and sustain in me a willing spirit.*
- 13 *Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
and sinners will return to you.*
- 14 *Deliver me from bloodshed, O God,
O God of my salvation,
and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance.*
- 15 *O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will declare your praise.*
- 16 *For you have no delight in sacrifice;
if I were to give a burnt offering, you would not be pleased.*
- 17 *The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.*

*18 Do good to Zion in your good pleasure;
rebuild the walls of Jerusalem,
19 then you will delight in right sacrifices,
in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings;
then bulls will be offered on your altar.*

Devotion

Nathan Salamacha '23

Asking for forgiveness is hard. It's even harder to admit what we have done wrong. We are all taught from a young age that we should have the discretion not to tell the whole truth. This sometimes protects those around us, but we can also fall into the trap of letting these protective measures become actions to cover our pride and deceive for self-gain. When we get in the habit of telling too many little white lies, they can catch up to us in the long run when our actions are unveiled to those around us. It can lead to an atmosphere of mistrust and fear. We sometimes even try to do this with God. We excuse our actions even though God already knows what is in our hearts. But can you really blame us?

Obscuring our faults can not only be a way to deceive others but can be a survival tactic we have learned to protect ourselves. There are many people in our world who are interested in power and control above all else. They take what we have done and turn it into abuse, fighting for control over our lives. But the good news of the psalmist is that God is not that way. God is not interested in holding things over our heads in pursuit of absolute abusive control but instead calls us to a new life full of restoration and healing. During this Lenten season, I hope that we can have the courage to trust God with our shortcomings knowing that we will be renewed with a joyful spirit. God's goodness goes beyond the controlling attitudes and faults of those around us. It is something that brings salvation and perfection into our lives. It is a place where we can rest as a refuge for our souls. Our protective walls can come down as we can be fully honest and vulnerable with the Life-Giver of our universe.

Prayer

God of life, as we tend to our souls this Lenten season let us have courage to approach you with our faults and mistakes. Allow us to not only repent of them but to be filled with a new and right spirit which comes from you. Let your resurrecting reality seep into us as we prepare to celebrate your saving power through Christ Jesus. Amen.